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6 April 2020

Mr Benjamin Axon
Carlton Colville Primary School
Gisleham Road
Carlton Colville
Lowestoft
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Dear Mr Axon

No formal designation inspection of Carlton Colville Primary School

Following my visit with Jo Nutbeam and Kay Tims Ofsted Inspectors to your school on 10–11 March 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted’s published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the quality of education at the school. The school’s previous inspection was on 28–29 November 2011, when the school’s overall effectiveness was judged outstanding.

This school remains outstanding.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding arrangements. We looked at records of pupils’ behaviour, attendance, and complaints from parents.

Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the pastoral team, class teachers and subject leaders, support staff, the chair of the governing body and five other governors, pupils and parents. Telephone discussions took place with a representative from the local authority and the school’s improvement partner. In addition to talking to parents at the start and end of the two school days on site, we considered the views of the 99 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View,

the comments from three parents who wrote to us during and after the on-site inspection, and the 158 responses to the school's survey in November 2019.

We looked in detail at the quality of education in reading, writing, mathematics, science and music. Lessons were visited, curriculum plans and policies discussed with subject leaders and teachers, and pupils' work scrutinised.

Context

The school was judged outstanding in its most recent inspection, in 2011. The headteacher joined the school in 2017. The chair of governors is the same as at the previous inspection.

There are 448 pupils on roll, including children attending the nursery each morning. There are two classes for each year group from Reception to Year 6. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Most pupils who join in Reception stay until the end of Year 6.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with the national average for those with an education, health and care plan; and below average for those identified for special educational needs support. Increasingly, pupils are identified with SEND relating to speech, language and communication needs.

There is a breakfast club from 7.45am each day. The after-school club runs until 6pm.

Main findings

As a result of this inspection, there is no change to Ofsted's judgement of the school's overall effectiveness. The school remains outstanding.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils remain effective. The required employment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately. There are three designated leaders for safeguarding pupils and they make sure that staff are well informed about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The pastoral team plays an important part in making sure that pupils' well-being has high priority and that concerns are addressed quickly and appropriately.

When asked to describe their lessons, pupils told us that learning is fun, interesting and that teachers have lots of things to tell them. We saw pupils enjoying the activities and talking enthusiastically with one another about what they were doing. Pupils are very articulate and knowledgeable. Being able to make connections between different things that they have learned is something that pupils of all ages are really good at. They get on with their work without any fuss.

Most parents that we met or who responded to Parent View are very positive about the work of school staff. Some parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour, access to clubs and activities, how well their children are doing, not knowing what their children are learning or how well they are doing, and/or that their concerns are not dealt with properly. Although the concerns generally mirror those in a survey carried out by leaders in November 2019, the evidence that we gathered does not match the extent of the concerns raised on Parent View. We spoke with many parents and their views were almost completely positive.

It is true that, about 18 months ago, the behaviour of a few pupils was causing concern. This is no longer the case. Pupils' behaviour is managed well. Leaders took action quickly to adapt the behaviour policy and the curriculum to respond to the changing needs of the pupils. We talked to lots of pupils and they told us that poor behaviour is rare and usually involves minor disagreements, which are sorted out quickly.

We found that staff are very quick to identify when pupils find things difficult in their school work or their personal lives. The inclusion team, which consists of the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leader, plays a significant part in giving pupils the support they need at the right time to keep on track. Pupils of all abilities benefit from the good work of the team. Teachers see the team as critical in keeping pupils focused on learning in class as best they can. The needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs are particularly well supported. Support to parents includes workshops, such as the one on mental health which took place during the inspection, attended by 47 parents.

Of the 17 parents of children with SEND who responded to Parent View, just over half said that their children do not get the support they need to succeed. This view was not common among the parents who we spoke to. Observing pupils with SEND in class and at play, speaking to some about their work and experiences, and looking more broadly at the academic and personal development of pupils with SEND, we found that they achieve well over time from their individual starting points.

Regarding parents not getting their concerns dealt with properly, the headteacher and other senior leaders records complaints appropriately and keep in touch with parents to check if issues reoccur. Many parents told us that staff are available, approachable and respond quickly to concerns.

It is not clear why parents feel uninformed. Staff are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each day, and at the start and end of each morning for the Nursery. The website, newsletters and electronic communications with parents provide a lot of information about events, clubs, activities and what pupils are learning.

The curriculum is of high quality. Traditionally, pupils of all abilities and needs achieve well as they move from one year to the next. Last year, there was a dip in writing results for pupils at the end of Year 6, which has been addressed successfully. There are good opportunities for pupils to write, whatever the lesson or the topic. Pupils enjoy writing from an early age and the ability to write is very much linked to the curriculum for reading and spelling for all year groups. There are lots of books at the right level for pupils to read unaided, for pleasure and for study. Pupils read fluently and with expression, including those who find reading difficult or who are just learning to read. When planning lessons, whatever the subject, teachers are very good at matching the reading and writing to pupils' skills and interests.

Activities in class are designed well to give experiences that are meaningful and that will stand pupils in good stead when they go to high school. Having opportunities that they might not otherwise get is an important consideration when staff plan what pupils will learn and experience. Learning to play the pennywhistle, going to the Houses of Parliament and residential trips are but a few of the opportunities available.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have, for some time, driven curriculum development successfully, providing strong strategic leadership, and knowing how far and how fast to make changes. They have very clear views about what pupils should learn and be able to do at each point in each school year. The quality of their leadership is understated, they just get on with it. Governors keep a close check on leaders' work and challenge well when needed, as was the case when the behaviour management policy and practice needed updating and when standards in writing declined in 2019. Subject leaders have very high expectations of what pupils will achieve, are highly motivated and take their responsibilities very seriously. They have the time and support to develop their expertise and to make sure that the curriculum is taught well.

Most staff have worked at the school for some time and been closely involved in curriculum developments over several years. They have a good understanding of the curriculum, and how to plan and teach effectively in all subjects. For teachers new to the school, including those new to the profession, the curriculum structure, systems and plans help them to teach subjects well right from the start. Staff are confident, and work together very closely and supportively. There are many opportunities to share practice, attend training and gain experience.

External support

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are outward-looking in their approach to school improvement and encourage staff to follow their lead. Whether new to roles and responsibilities or well-established professionals, staff make good use of

training not only to improve their knowledge and skills, but also the expertise of the staff.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector